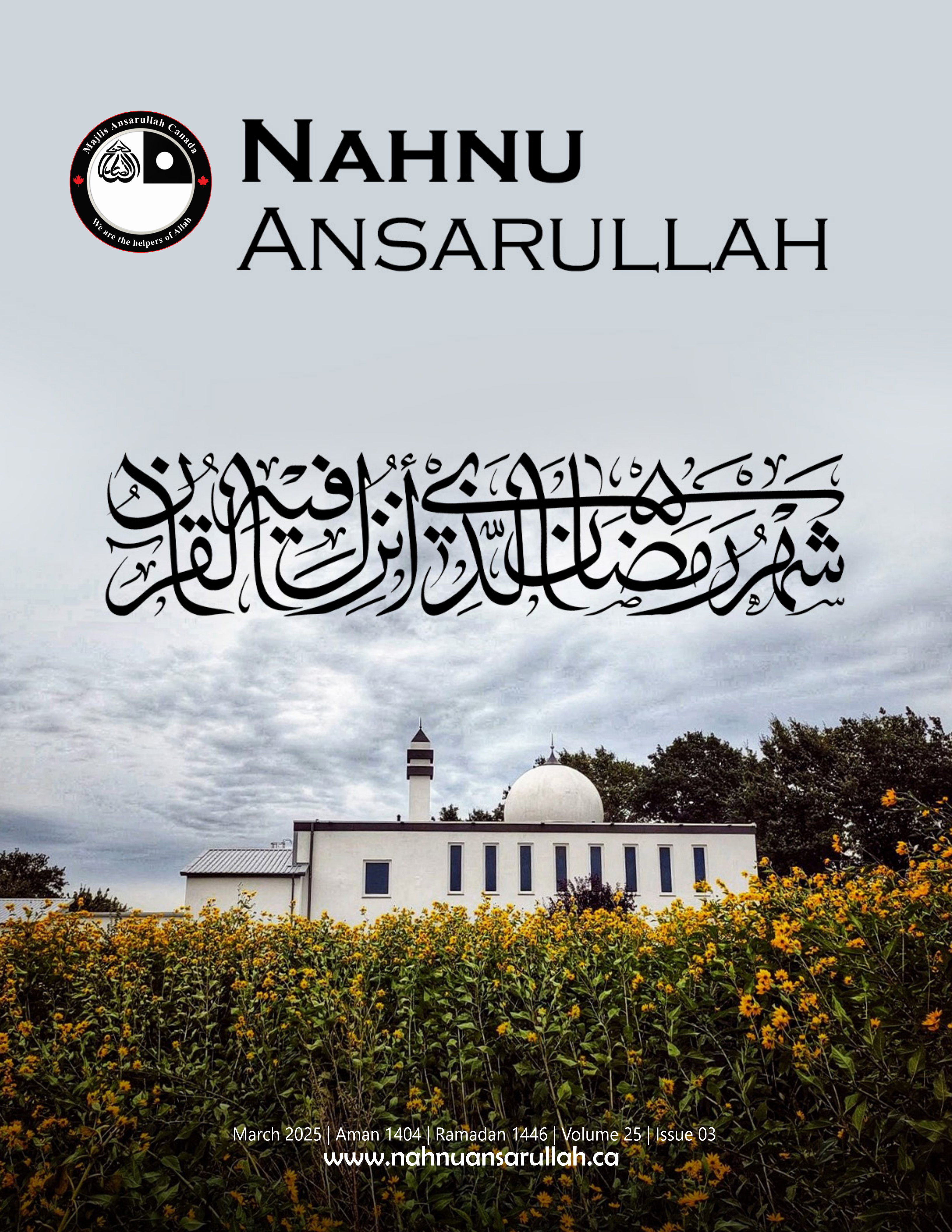

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SPECIAL APPEAL FOR PRAYERS

In his Friday Sermon of August 23, 2024, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (may Allah be his Helperl) instructed us to recite the following prayers to remain within the fortress of Divine protection, safe from Satanic onslaughts:

سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَبِحَمْدِهٖ سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ الْعَظِيْمِ اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

Translation: *Holy is Allah with His praise, Holy is Allah the Great, O Allah, bless Muhammad and the people of Muhammad*

(200 Times Daily for age 25+, 100 Times Daily for ages 15-25, 33 Times Daily for children and 3-4 Times Daily for small children

اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ رَبِّيْ مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَّاَتُوْبُ اِلَيْهِ

Translation: *I seek forgiveness from Allah, my Lord, for all my sins, and turn to Him.*

(100 Times Daily)

رَبِّ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ خَادِمُكَ رَبِّ فَاحْفَظْنِيْ وَانْصُرْنِيْ وَارْحَمْنِيْ

Translation: *O my Lord, everything is Your servant. O my Lord, so protect me, help me and have mercy upon me!*

(100 Times Daily)

His Holiness^{aa} said that these days when Satan is trying to attack our Community and the world at large, the only way for us to remain safeguarded is through prayers. Hence, we should recite these prayers, not just during the days of Jalsa but throughout the year.

(Friday Sermon of August 23, 2024)

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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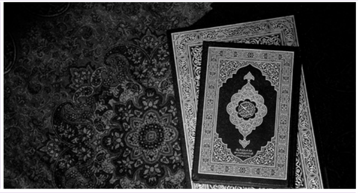

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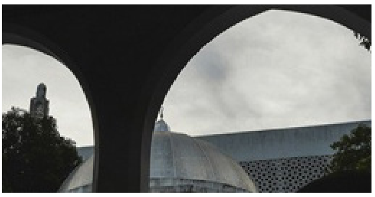

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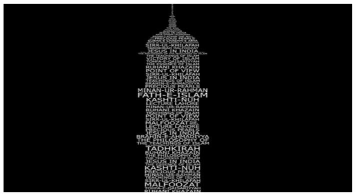

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THE BENEFITS OF FASTING:
A RELIGIOUS AND SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE

HEALTH & WELLNESS SEMINAR REPORT MISSISSAUGA REGION
REPORT PREPARED BY
GHYOUR KHAN - NAZIM ZAHANAT WA SEHAT JISMANI
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The Holy Qur’an

Photo by AmirHadi Manavi on Unsplash.com

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ۙ﴿١٨٤﴾

Translation

O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous. (2:184)

Short Commentary

The command to fast, whatever its details, is to be found in most religions in one form or another. The early devotions and fasting of Buddha, the fasting of Moses, prior to his receiving the Ten Commandments, the fasts of Jesus before his receiving the heavenly call, all testify to the importance of this institution. In fact, fasting is a form of devotion and self-discipline which has a natural appeal to man. The verse under comment, however, does not mean that fasting has been prescribed for the Muslims in the same form in which it was prescribed for the people of earlier faiths. Islam has greatly spiritualized this institution by attaching to it several highly useful regulations and restrictions.

The clause, so that you may become righteous, explains the deep philosophy underlying the commandment relating to fasting. It is a special characteristic of the Quran that, whenever it gives an important commandment, it does not give it arbitrarily but also explains its usefulness so that the addressee may be convinced of, and satisfied about, the wisdom underlying it. The object of fasting has been stated in this verse as the attainment of righteousness.

The first object is attained through fasting in two ways: (1) When a man commits evil deeds and becomes deserving of God’s punishment on account of those deeds, but later feels ashamed of them and turns to God in repentance, then fasting serves as an atonement for his sins. (2) Fasting not only makes a man fit and able to bear hardships but also makes him realize the sufferings of his brethren in distress and feel sympathy for them.

HADITH

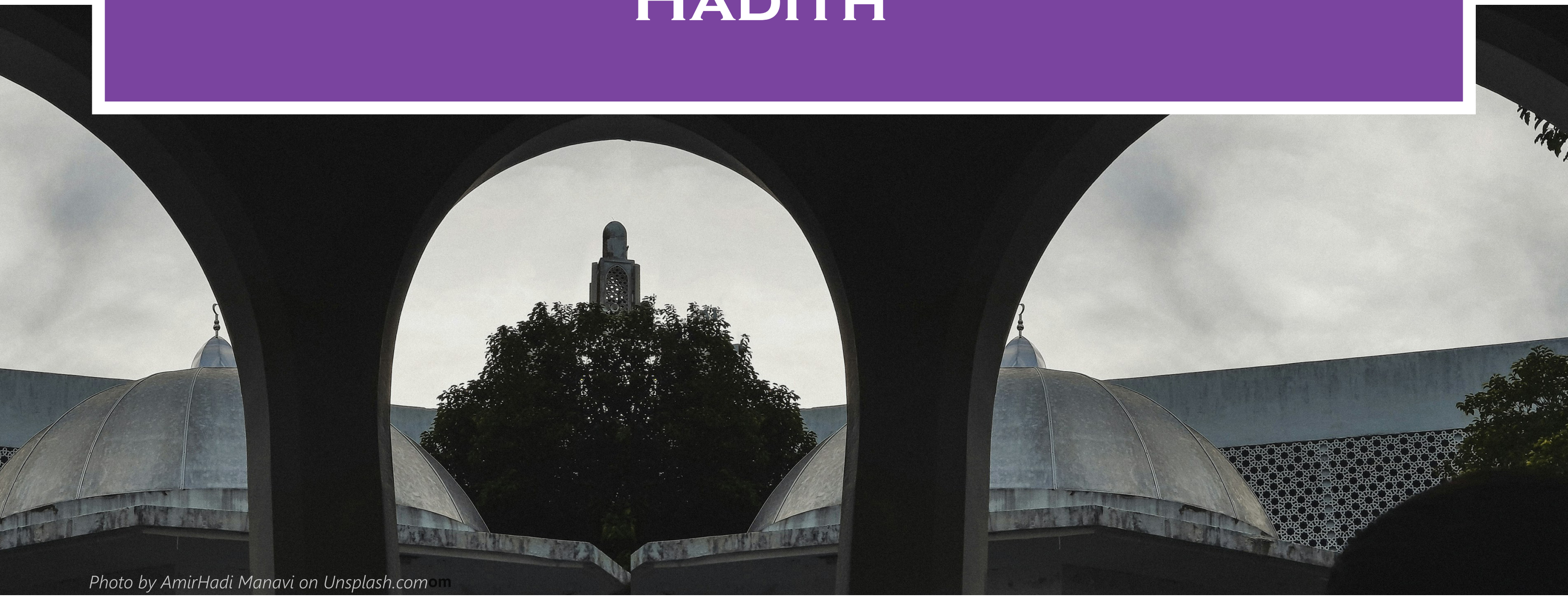


Photo by AmirHadi Manavi on Unsplash.com

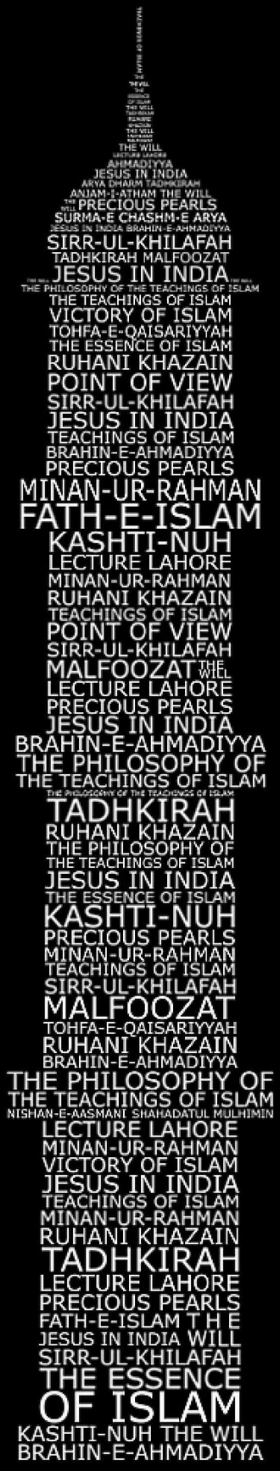
عَنْ عَبْدِ اللّٰهِ ابْنِ عَمْرٍو رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ: لَيَأْتِيَنَّ عَلٰى اُمَّتِيْ مَا اَتٰى عَلٰى بَنِيْ
اِسْرَائِيْلَ حَذْوَ النَّعْلِ بِالنَّعْلِ، حَتّٰى اِنْ كَانَ مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ اَتٰى اُمَّهٗ عَلَانِيَةً لَكَانَ فِيْ اُمَّتِيْ مَنْ يَّصْنَعُ ذٰلِكَ
، وَاَنَّ بَنِيْ اِسْرَائِيْلَ تَفَرَّقَتْ عَلٰى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِيْنَ مِلَّةً، وَ تَفْتَرِقُ اُمَّتِيْ عَلٰى ثَلَاثٍ وَّسَبْعِيْنَ مِلَّةً،
كُلُّهُمْ فِي النَّارِ اِلَّا مِلَّةً وَّاحِدَةً، قَالُوْا: مَنْ هِيَ يَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ؟ قَالَ: مَا اَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَاَصْحَابِيْ ۔
(جامع الترمذی کتاب الایمان باب افتراق ھذہ الامۃ)

Translation

Abdullah bin ‘Amr, God be pleased with both of them, relates that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said:
“Surely things will happen to my people as happened earlier to the Israelites. They will resemble each other like one shoe in a pair resembles the other to the extent that if anyone among the Israelites had openly committed adultery with his mother, there will be some who would do this in my ummah (people) as well. Verily, the Israelites were divided into 72 sects, but my people will be divided into 73 sects. All of them will be in the Fire except one.’
The Companions asked, ‘Who are they, O Messenger of Allah?’ The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: They are the people who will follow my practice and that of my companions.”

(Tirmidhi)

SO SAID THE PROMISED MESSIAH AS



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Picture Source : x.com/AhmadiyyaMosque

“I am not alone. That noble Lord is with me. No one could be closer to me than Him. It is only by His Grace that I have been granted a loving soul, ever willing to serve His cause in the face of suffering, so that I should render with zeal and sincerity, outstanding services in the cause of the faith and carry out to victory, great (spiritual) expeditions for Islam. He has commissioned me to accomplish all this, and none can make me desist from pursuing this cause.”

(Ayena e Kamalat e Islam:
Roohani Khaza’in Vol. 5, p 35)

Journey Of The Promised Messiah ^{AS}

(M Adam Ahmad, Al Hakam, September 2023)

This series, Zikr-e-Habib, explores the life of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, and his sayings, shedding light on his noble character and the impact of his teachings on his followers and the world at large.

Prophets of Allah the Almighty embark on various journeys. They are driven by God Almighty's revelations to spread His message and fulfil this most important responsibility. While the principal objective of Allah's messengers is to propagate His divine mission, their travels are also divinely orchestrated to allow their elevated morals and exemplary character to shine forth upon people. The early trading journeys of the young Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, were one of the most important parts of his life. The Arabs mostly travelled on famous trade routes, i.e., Syria, Yemen, Egypt, etc.

During one of the trade journeys to Syria, a Christian monk named Bahira noticed signs of prophethood in the young Muhammad^{sa} and advised his uncle, Abu Talib, to take great care of him, for he was destined to become a great prophet. (The Life & Character of the Seal of Prophets, Vol. 1, pp. 138-139)

The Holy Prophet's^{sa} journey to Taif was another important occasion in his life, as it was undertaken in the way of Allah the Almighty to propagate and promote the message of Islam. Though it did not immediately result in their conversion to Islam, it served as a foundation, and the people of Taif eventually accepted God's message after the victory of Mecca. When the infidels of Mecca rejected God's message and the followers of the Holy Prophet^{sa} were subjected to severe violence and hardships, the journey of Prophet Muhammad^{sa} to Medina was another historical event that marked the beginning of a new era in the propagation of Islam.

In the last age, the Messiahas of Prophet Muhammadsa, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad ^{as} also embarked on various journeys throughout his life and spared no effort to spread the true teachings of Islam.

Purpose of travel:

One of the earliest biographers of the Promised Messiah^{as}, Hazrat Sheikh Yaqub Ali Irfani^{ra} narrates:

"The Promised Messiah^{as} did not have a habit of travelling or tourism as a pastime, and hence he never went on any journey with this intention. "Before he was divinely commissioned, obeying his late father to pursue certain cases,

Picture Source : Wiki Commons

the Promised Messiah^{as} had to travel to Batala, Gurdaspur, Dalhousie, and Lahore. In the same period, he made two journeys to Sialkot and Jammu for the purpose of employment. At this [young] age, Huzoor^{as} used to pay a visit to certain righteous elders as well.

“After he was appointed [by God Almighty], the reason and purpose of the Promised Messiah’s ^{as} journeys was only to promote the truth of Islam and the propagation of this great faith. In this, I also include those journeys that Huzoor ^{as} had to take to follow the cases made against him or his Jamaat’s members by the internal and external enemies of Islam. To pursue these cases, the Promised Messiah^{as} travelled to Gurdaspur, Batala, Dhariwal, Pathankot, Jhelum and Multan. In addition to that, Huzoor ^{as} journeyed to Amritsar, Jandiala, Lahore, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Patiala, Sanur, Aligarh, Ambala, Ferozepur, Ludhiana, and Delhi to preach and spread the message of Islam Ahmadiyyat.

“Before his prophethood, the Promised Messiah ^{as} had a very simple routine in the travels he made to set a great example of obedience to [his father], late Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Murtaza Sahib. Huzoor^{as} would not take all the belongings with him. His clothes were only the dress he would be wearing, and apart from that, Huzoor^{as} used to carry simple bedding, a vessel, and a glass with him.

“After God entrusted Huzoor^{as} with prophethood, the nature of his journeys also changed, and a group of companions used to travel along with him. Therefore, it was his usual practice to keep several candles, matchsticks, different types of essential medicines, etc., so that, when need be, they did not have to go out searching for them. Moreover, since fountain pens were not available at that time, the Promised Messiah^{as} would also keep [quill] pens, paper, and an inkpot with him.

“In the long preaching journeys, Ummul Momineen [Hazrat Amma Jan^{ra}] and the children would usually accompany him as well. The Promised Messiah^{as} used to sit inside the yakka [horse-driven carriage]. During the train journeys, Huzoor^{as} used to initially travel in the second class, and then later on, in the third or inter class [i.e., the class between the second and the third]. However, the Promised Messiah^{as} had no special preferences for the third, inter or second classes.” (Sirat Hazrat Masih-e-Maud ^{as} by Hazrat Yaqub Ali Irfani^{ra}, pp. 78-80)

Extensive journeys in the way of Allah:

The Promised Messiah^{as} said:

“On my part, I have endeavored to communicate the message [of Islam Ahmadiyyat] by personally visiting some cities of the Punjab and India like Amritsar, Lahore, Jalandhar, Sialkot, Delhi, Ludhiana, and others. I have communicated the message of God Almighty in large gatherings and presented the beauties of Islam in the presence of thousands of people. And I have written some seventy books expounding the truth of Islam in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and English, about 100,000 copies of which have been published in Muslim countries. To the same end, I have published several hundred thousand pamphlets, and by the grace of God Almighty and His guidance, more than 300,000 persons, as of today, have repented of their sins at my hands, and this process continues at such a fast pace that each month hundreds of people continue to enter into the covenant of allegiance with me.

“People of foreign lands are not unaware of my

Jamaat. In fact, my message has reached even the countries of America and remote countries of Europe to the extent that in America many people have joined my Jamaat, and, on their own, had many leading American newspapers publish my prophecies regarding the extraordinary earthquakes as proof of my Signs. Some of the Europeans, too, have joined my Jamaat. I need not mention the Muslim world; for, as I have just stated, more than 300,000 people have entered this Jamaat, and people have come to know of thousands of Signs. And most of them are pious and of good disposition." (The Philosophy of Divine Revelation [Haqiqatul Wahi], p. 207)

Regarding Prophet Ahmad's[as] journey of writing and publishing his magnum opus, Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Iain Adamson relates that Chaudhary Sir Zafrulla Khan[ra] said:

"Qadian was situated 11 miles from the nearest railway station and telegraph office. It boasted few amenities. The nearest printing press was situated at Amritsar, a matter of 35 miles from Qadian. There was no one in Qadian who could have in any way assisted the author in the writing and production of this great work.

"He wrote out the manuscript by hand, and when the time came for committing it to the printing press, he himself took it to Amritsar. This involved a journey on a dirt track studded with potholes, which was easier to traverse on foot than by means of one of the uncomfortable and perilous spring-less horse-drawn contraptions that were occasionally available. This was followed by a railway journey of 24 miles. "The book was thus conceived, written, and published entirely through the efforts of a single individual, assisted only by the Grace and Bounty of the Divine." (Ahmad[as], The Guided One, pp. 76)

Christ-like journeying:

Under the above heading, Hazrat Maulana Abdur Rahim Dard[ra] narrates that the Promised Messiah[as] went to Lahore in January 1892 and gave a speech refuting all allegations of the Mullahs there. "From Lahore [Prophet] Ahmad[as] went to Sialkot and thence to Jullundur about the middle of March from where he proceeded to Ludhiana and then he returned to Qadian in the third week of May [1892].

"He had to undertake these journeys for God had willed that he should have a resemblance to the first Messiah[as]. He preached during the day and prayed during the night, beseeching God to have mercy on mankind and reveal His face unto them. In spite of his age and weak health, he neither tired nor grew weary and went about the Lord's work ever cheerful and happy. He heeded not the opposition which was offered to him nor the abuse, which was heaped upon him, and returned a stern answer only when he was afraid that truth would suffer for lack of it, and even then, his object always was to admonish and not to inflict pain.

"In all his journeyings – under every species of insult, opposition and misrepresentation – he most perfectly illustrated the precepts and principles of the religion he taught. His love and compassion; his forbearance and forgiveness; his meekness and wisdom; his simplicity and purity; his equanimity and self-possession can find a parallel only in Jesus[as] or the Holy Founder of Islam, [Prophet Muhammad[sa]]." (Life of Ahmad[as], pp. 326-327)

God drew people to Ahmad[as]:

Hazrat Abdur Rahim Dardra M.A.[ra] writes:

"In view of the earnest appeals of his Ludhiana friends, it is probable that he [the Promised Messiah[as]] visited that town somewhere during the first quarter of the year 1884. "Mir Inayat Ali, who is the son-in-law and nephew of Mir Abbas Ali, says that Ahmad[as] was accompanied by Jan Muhammad, Hafiz Hamid Ali[ra] and Malawa Mal. There was a crowd of people, including Nawab Muhammad Ali of Jhajjar, at the Ludhiana railway station to receive Ahmad[as] , though he was not personally known to the people there. Arrangements for his short stay were made in the Muhalla Sufian. He used to go out for walks, and crowds followed him wherever he went.

"Though he stayed in Ludhiana only for two or three days, he left an indelible impression of righteousness and saintliness in the hearts of the people. Something seemed to draw people towards him, and everyone who came to see him felt that he was in the company of a holy man. Seekers after truth and all lovers of Islam were comforted at seeing him. The righteous were thrilled with joy and bliss when they heard the words of wisdom which fell from his lips." (Ibid., p. 129)

Selflessness during travels:

Hazrat Mirza Din Muhammad Sahib^ra^ related to Hazrat Sahibzada Mirza Bashir Ahmad M.A.^ra^:

"During the days when I [Hazrat Mirza Din Muhammad^ra^] would regularly visit the Promised Messiah^as^, Huzoor^as^ used to go with his associates, etc., to pursue the cases. [Your] grandfather, [Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Murtaza Sahib] had entrusted this work to Huzoor^as^ and [your] paternal uncle, [Mirza Ghulam Qadir Sahib] was employed outside [of Qadian with the government].

"When Huzoor ^as^ would go to Batala, he used to take me with him. After leaving the house for the journey, he would make me sit on the horse and himself walk on foot. The servant would be holding the horse.

"Sometimes Huzoor^as^ used to ride the horse at the turn on the way to Batala and at times when we would reach the river. He would not make me get off the horse but rather say, 'You should keep sitting. I will ride later on.' This is how we would reach Batala. […] While returning from Batala, Huzoor ^as^ would keep me sitting [on the horse] during the entire journey. At times, he would ride along with me and then walk on other times." (Sirat-ul-Mahdi, Vol. 1, narration 680)

In his book, Sirat-e-Tayyibah, Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad M.A.^ra^ states: "A man [Hazrat Mirza Din Muhammad^ra^] told me that in his early life, he used to accompany the Promised Messiah^as^ as an attendant on his journeys. 'Most often,' he said, Hazrat Ahmad^as^ would make me mount his horse, and he would himself walk on foot by my side. If I insisted, he would ride for some short distance, get down again, and make me ride as before. Upon reaching the destination, he would usually give me four annas [sixteen annas equate to one rupee] for a meal (living was extremely cheap in those days), but he himself would subsist on a little boiled pulse and some bread bought only for one anna, or even a handful of parched chick-peas. The Promised Messiah^as^ had a very modest diet." (Sirat-e-Tayyibah, p. 63)

Glory of God in nature:

In his biography of the Promised Messiah^as^ Iain Adamson writes:

"Many of his [Prophet Ahmad's^as^] father's legal cases were heard in Dalhousie, a hill station named after a former viceroy, which was some 100 miles from Qadian and 8,000 feet above sea level, or in Lahore, which is about 70 miles from Qadian. The roads were little better than tracks and there was no public transport which meant that Ahmad^as^ went on foot, taking several days on the journey. His father would provide him with a horse and a servant, but Ahmad^as^ usually preferred to walk, sending the servant ahead to arrange accommodation. He would cover 20 to 25 miles a day on foot.

"Though he disliked the purpose of his journey, Ahmad^as^ said later, he enjoyed the grandeur of the scenery, the majestic mountains, the lush greenery of the vegetation, and the sparkling, gushing mountain streams. It was totally different from the heat and dust of Qadian in the summer and the mud and damp in the rainy seasons, 'I felt the infinite beauty and glory of God in these surroundings,' he said later. 'I felt closer to God.'" (Ahmad^as^, The Guided One, pp. 34-35)

Obedience to Prophet Muhammad^sa^

Once, the Promised Messiah^as^ journeyed to Gurdaspur for a court hearing. It was a hot summer night. Keeping his comfort in mind, Huzoor's^as^ bed was arranged on the roof of the house where he was staying to allow for a cool air flow. When the Promised Messiah[as] came up and noticed that there was no wall around the perimeter of the roof, Huzoor[as] said to his followers, "Do you not know that the Holy Prophet[sa] has instructed us not to sleep on a roof with no limiting walls?"

Consequently, the Promised Messiah[as] did not sleep on the roof and instead slept downstairs in a closed room, despite the immense heat. (Sirat-e-Tayyibah, p. 98)

Profound love for the Holy Quran:

Iain Adamson writes: "Courts in India at that time [of the Promised Messiah[as]] operated without much regard for time. A day was given for proceedings to begin, and all those involved in the cases to be heard turned up at the same time. When the judge was ready to hear a particular case, a crier would go outside and shout out the names of the plaintiff and defendant. If, after several days of waiting, you did not happen to be there, then you were unlucky – the case went ahead without you.

"[Prophet] Ahmad[as] used the time of waiting to study the Quran. His study of the Quran was so intense that the driver of a bullock cart recounted that once he took Ahmad[as] from Qadian to Batala, some 11 miles away. The journey took five hours, and throughout that time Ahmad [as] read and reread only one page, that of the Surah al-Fatihah, the opening chapter of the Holy Quran."

Ahmad[as], The Guided One:

Hazrat Sahibzada Mirza Bashir Ahmad M.A.[ra] narrates: "A man related to me that on one occasion, the Promised Messiah[as] was travelling to Batala in a palanquin, and this journey would normally take around five hours. As soon as he was clear of the village habitations, the Promised Messiah[as] took out his small copy of the Holy Quran and began to study Surah al-Fatihah. During his entire journey, the Promised Messiah[as] was deeply engrossed in [the contents] of this Surah. Huzoor[as] continued to study it as if it were a vast ocean and he was diving into its depths in search of the pearls of bounties and blessings of his Eternal Beloved [God]." (Sirat-e-Tayyibah, p. 12)

Strong character:

Hazrat Maulvi Abdul Karim Sialkoti[ra] relates: "I have accompanied His Holiness, [Prophet Ahmad[as]] on his travels to Delhi, Patiala, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Sialkot, Kapurthala and Jalandhar. Countless incidents of unpleasant nature have arisen, but this Lion of Allah, the Lord of Dominance, viewed all of these situations with no concern whatsoever. I swear an oath that it is these very endearing ways that have captivated me completely. On a daily basis, this ungrateful nation, either in writing or verbally, makes hurtful statements, but the footsteps of this divinely appointed man of God do not stumble even in the least. Contrary to this, we observe that the normal state of ordinary people is that when faced with even a hint of grief or the most insignificant of disappointments, they lose their senses, their work is disturbed, they are unable to eat or drink, and their stomach becomes upset. They rave at home, and will stare angrily at people, and strike others. In short, everything falls apart." (Life of the Promised Messiah[as], pp. 108-109)

Visiting companions:

Hazrat Maulana Abdur Rahim Dard[ra] says:

"My uncle, M Abdullah Sanauri[ra], says that Ahmad[as] visited Sanaur also in 1884 at his request, (he went from Sirhind), and blessed his humble home with his presence. My uncle's grandfather, Muhammad Bakhsh, was alive at that time and had the honour of shaking hands with him. How sweet of Ahmad[as] to deepen and consecrate the bond of companionship with his humble servants with such acts of grace and kindness!" (Life of Ahmad[as], p. 131)

Reward of journeying for God's cause:

The Promised Messiah[ra] said: "It is not an easy task to journey to far-off countries and foreign lands. Although it is true that travel has become more convenient in this day and age, who can know for certain whether they will return from the journey alive. It is not easy to leave behind small children, wives, other relatives, and dear ones. These people are open-heartedly leaving behind their businesses and affairs unattended and in a state of danger to undertake this journey, which I believe is worthy of immense spiritual reward.

“Firstly, they will be worthy of a reward from God because they are setting out on this journey purely to manifest the greatness and Unity of God Almighty; secondly, they will receive a reward on account of the hardships and difficulties that they will have to bear during the course of this trip. Allah the Exalted does not waste a good deed performed by anyone:

فَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَّرَهٗ

‘Then whoso does an atom’s weight of good will see it.’ (Surah al-Zilzal, Ch.99: V.8)

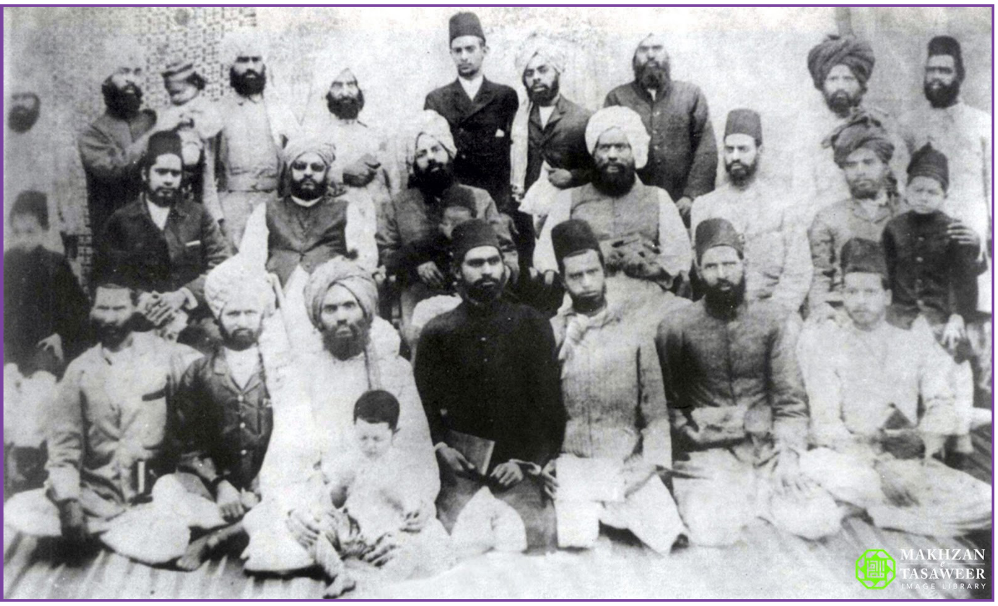
“Now when He does not allow for even an ounce of goodness performed by anyone to go in vain, can the spiritual reward of such an important journey, which almost resembles a migration, go without recompense from God? Of course not.”

“Devotion and loyalty, however, are necessary. One must shun ostentation and the desire for fame and self-renown. I believe that one cannot bear the trials and tribulations of land and sea, and take upon themselves a kind of death, unless they are filled with sincerity. A large number of brothers will continue to pray for these men, and I shall also continue to offer prayers for them that Allah the Exalted may make them successful in this mission and return them to us safe and sound. The truth is that even the angels will pray for them and shall accompany them on the way.” (Malfuzat [English], Vol. 2, pp. 54-55)

Conclusion:

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to adequately describe all of Prophet Ahmad’s ^{as} journeys, but it is quite clear from the accounts mentioned above that the primary objective of his travels was to convey God’s message and establish His mission. During these expeditions in the way of Allah the Almighty, the Promised Messiah^{as} had a profound effect on those he met.

A historical group photo of the Promised Messiah^{as} with his companions



From Right: (Standing) *Malik Ghulam Hussain Rohtasi, Maulvi Hakeem Qut’b-ud-din, Mahar Nabi Bakhsh Batalvi, Hakeem Muhammad Hussain, Abdullah Arab, Hakeem Fazal Din Bhervi, Bhai Abdur Rahim, Pir Manzoor Muhammad (with his daughter), Mirza Ismail Beig.* ***(On Chairs)*** *Sahibzada Mirza Bashir Ahmad on lap of Mian Miraj-ud-din Omar, Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, Hazrat Hakeem Maulvi Noor-ud-din, Hazrat Aqdas Masih-e-Mau’ood ^{as}, Sahibzada Mirza Sharif Ahmad on his lap, Maulvi Abdul Karim Sialkoti, Maulvi Muhammad Ali, Sahibzada Mirza Bashir-ud-din Mahmood Ahmad.* ***(On Floor)*** *Munshi Karam Ali, Maulvi Sher Ali, Shaikh Yaqoob Ali Turab, Malik Sher Muhammad, Pir Siraj-ul-haq Nomani (with his son) Mufti Fazal ur Rahman, Unknown $^{r.a.a.}$*

RULES OF FASTING: BEGINNING THE RAMADAN

Compiled by **Nisar Ahmad Shamas** Majlis Melville

Picture Source : x.com/AhmadiyyaMosque

Abu Hurai^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: start the month after sighting the new moon and end it at the next sighting. If you are unable to observe it by reason of the sky being overcast, postpone the fast by a day. (Bukhari and Muslim). Muslim adds: If you are unable to observe the new moon at the end of Ramadhan, observe the fast for the thirtieth day.

Ibn Abbas^{ra} relates that a man from the outskirts of the town came to the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and reported that he had sighted the moon. The Holy Prophet^{sa} asked him whether he would state this on oath that there was no God, but Allah and that Muhammad^{sa} was His Messenger. The man took the oath, whereupon the Holy Prophet^{sa} instructed Bilal^{ra} to announce that people should start fasting the next morning.

Talha ibn Ubaidullah^{ra} relates that on seeing the New Moon, the Holy Prophet^{sa} would supplicate: O' Allah, do Thou cause the appearance of this moon to be a harbinger of peace, faith, security and Islam for us. Thy Lord, O Moon, and mine is Allah. May this be a moon presaging guidance and good. (Tirmidhi).

The Times

As is well known, the phases of the moon result from the relative positions of the earth, moon and sun and at the opposition and conjunction of the moon's orbit around the earth (on average 29 days, 12 hours and 44.5 minutes) appear the Full Moon and the New Moon. Every solar year contains 12.37 lunar months, and as the years roll by, with the month of fasting moving from summer, through spring, winter and autumn, the cycle is completed in thirty-three years, each lunar year commencing about 11⅓ solar days earlier than the previous. A man who fasts the first full month of Ramadhan at the age of 18 years during the shorter winter days would fast again at the age of 50 in the same winter days according to the solar calendar. Apart from inhabitants of equatorial countries where the length of days throughout the year remains approximately equal, no undue perpetual hardship accrues for longer than a decade to those who live along the further latitudes.

Improved means of communication have meant that people living in a country can be told of the sighting of the new moon by a Qadi should the new moon not have been sighted in another locality. If confusion still exists, the foregoing traditions should form the basis of guidance. People often question the significance of 'New Moon' as quoted in Almanacs and appearing in the weather section of most newspapers. It is emphasised that at 'New Moon', the moon cannot be seen at the time indicated and allowance has to be made for the appearance of the first crescent. This is because the 'New Moon' phase is at conjunction to the position of the earth.

The fast begins approximately an hour before sunrise. Some people have been too pedantic about the words 'the break of dawn begins to manifest itself.' In the past, some Muslims used to sleep with two threads under their pillow, one black, the other white, and dawn was determined when they could clearly distinguish one from the other. The guiding principle is that before sunrise when the rays of sunshine become visible, there should be time enough to complete the recitation of fifty verses of the Holy Quran which takes about one hour if justice is to be done to this recitation. Present day almanacs give the precise time of sunset and sunrise. Muslim communities publish timetables for the commencement of the fast (about one hour before sunrise, Sehr) and the breaking of the fast (at sun-set, when the night approaches from the east and the sun is submerged beyond the horizon, Iftar) and such time-tables are normally reliable. In most Muslim countries, the people determine their fast according to the Call for Prayers, the Azan: you must stop eating when the morning Azan ends, and you should break the fast immediately when the evening Azan starts.

Some people ridicule Islam by stating that it may be correct for people to fast but what about the people who live near the poles and have the mid-night sun. Islam is a universal religion meant for all pople in all parts of the earth. The Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, made a prophecy about such circumstances too. A time would come when Islam would spread to a place where the sun never sets. Asked 1400 years ago what Muslims should do to fulfill their obligation for prayers and fasting, the Prophet^{sa} said that they should reckon a day by twelve hours duration (so that a Muslim may fast from 6.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. in such areas) (Muslim: Ch. Ashrat al-Saah).

Anticipation of Ramadhan with one or two Fasts

Abu Hurai^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: Do not observe the fast on two days preceding Ramadhan, but this does not apply to one who has made a practice of it. (Bukhari and Muslim). Abu Hurai^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said: When the middle of Shaban (before Ramadhan) arrives, do not observe a fast during the rest of it. (Tirmidhi).

Fasting procedure: Niyah

A person who wishes to observe the fast must express his or her intention to fast in words such as: I hereby express my intention to keep the fast of tomorrow during the month of Ramadhan.

وَبِصَوْمِ غَدٍ نَّوَيْتُ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ

Wa be sawme ghadin nawayto min shahre Ramadhan

Sehr — Pre-dawn Meals:

Hazrat Anas, on whom be peace, says: the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: serve yourselves with breakfast, for they are blessed. (Bukhari and Muslim). In Musnad-i-Ahmad it is written that pre-dawn meals are blessed, therefore they should not be left out even though it may consist of a mouthful of water, for God and His angels shower blessings upon those who partake of pre-dawn meals.

Hazrat Amr ibn Aas^{ra} says: the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: the distinctive feature between our fasts and those of the people of the Book is the partaking of pre-dawn meals. (Muslim).

It is patently obvious that one should get up for the early morning Tahajjud prayers and have a light breakfast, although a fast is nonetheless valid if one should have expressed the intention to fast the night before, overslept and be unable to have had any breakfast, (Sehr).

Hazrat Anas^{ra} says that Hazrat Zaid bin Sabit ^{ra} told him that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, took pre-dawn meals with them and then led the prayers. I asked, how long was the interval between the meals and the call for prayers and he answered that it was the time required for the recital of fifty verses. (Bukhari and Muslim).

Eating or Drinking by Mistake

Hazrat Abu Huraira, on whom be peace, relates that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: Should any of you eat or drink in forgetfulness of the fast, he should continue his fast till the end, for Allah has fed him and given him to drink. (Bukhari and Muslim).

However, anyone who eats or drinks in forgetfulness, and, having realised his mistake, still continues to eat or drink. has effectively broken his fast.

Early breaking of fast:

Hazrat Sahl ibn Sa'ad, on whom be peace, relates that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: My people will adhere to good as long as thy do not delay the breaking of the fast. (Bukhari and Muslim). In another Hadith, Hazrat Abu Huraira^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said that Allah, the Lord of honour and glory proclaimed: Of My servants I love most those who are foremost in breaking their fasts. (Tirmidhi).

In view of these sayings of the Holy Prophet and of God Almighty, it is essential that a fast should be ended immediately after the sunset as there is no merit in prolonging it beyond this point.

Prayer at ending the Fast

اَللّٰھُمَّ لَکَ صُمْتُ وَ عَلٰی رِزْقِکَ اَفْطَرْتُ

Allah Humma laka sumto wa a'laa rizqeka 'aftartu'

Hazrat Maaz ibn Zahra, on whom be peace, says that he heard that whenever the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to end his fast, he used to pray: O our Lord, for Your sake I kept the fast and with Your food have I ended it. Hazrat Ibn Umar^{ra} said that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of God be upon him, used to say at ending a fast: Thirst has disappeared, and veins have received nourishment, and, God willing, reward has been secured.

With what to end the Fast

Hazrat Salman ibn Aamir Dhabi, on whom be peace, relates that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: if any among you keep a fast, he should end it with a date or else with water for it is pure (Abu Daud and Tirmidhi). Dates need no artificial preservative and have a high glucose content value which helps to revitalise the body rather quickly. They also have a fair proportion of iron in them.

Exemption for pregnant and suckling women:

Hazrat Anas^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: indeed, God has exempted a pregnant or a suckling woman from fasting. (The fasts thus lost can be kept after the condition has disappeared. The same applies to a sick person and women during their monthly periods).

A woman may do 'Niyah' while in menstruation in anticipation, and, should before dawn her monthly period have ended, the fast would be valid.

Fast and Travel:

Hazrat Jabir^{ra} relates: Once the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was on a journey and he saw a crowd around a person over whom a shade had been erected. He asked what the matter was, and the people replied that the man was fasting. The Holy Prophet^{sa} replied, it was no virtue to keep a fast while travelling.

Hazrat Ayesha^{ra}, the wife of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, says that Hazrat Hamza bin Amr-il-Aslami^{ra} who used to keep regular fasts told the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, that he fasted even when he was travelling. The Holy Prophet^{ra} replied it was up to him to keep or not to keep the fast. (This in fact relates to voluntary fasts).

The Holy Prophet^{sa} did sometime fast while travelling but this happened only when he was keeping voluntary fasts; otherwise, as far as the fasts during the month of Ramadhan are concerned, it is the Quranic injunction not to fast while travelling but to make up the lost count on other days.

Recompense for sex while fasting

Hazrat Abu Huraira[ra] relates that once we were sitting with the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him when a man came and cried: O' Messenger of Allah, I have indeed been doomed! The Holy Prophet[sa] asked what the matter was, and the man replied that he had consorted with his wife while he was fasting. The Holy Prophet[sa] asked him whether he could afford to free a slave, and he replied that he could not do so. He asked him whether he could fast continuously for two months, and the man replied to no. He asked him whether he could feed sixty poor, and the man replied to no. The Holy Prophet[sa] asked him to sit down and wait. Shortly thereafter, a basket of dates was brought by someone to the Holy Prophet[sa] whereupon he called for the person in question and asked him to feed those dates to the poor. The man said: By God, O' Messenger of Allah, there is no house poorer than mine in this valley. This made the Holy Prophet[sa] laugh so that even his back teeth could be seen, and said: All right, go and feed them to your family.

Should a person have consorted with his wife during the night, he should have a bath prior to the start of the fast.

The Night Prayers:

Hazrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[sa] said: The best month for fasting next after Ramadhan is Muharram, and the best prayer next after the prescribed prayers is Prayer at Night. (Muslim).

Hazrat Ibn Umar[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet [sa] said: Night prayer is a succession of two raka'as at a time, and when you perceive the approach of dawn add a single raka'a to make an odd number. (Bukhari and Muslim).

Hazrat Jabir[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[sa] was asked: Which prayer is best? He answered: The one in which the worshipper makes a long stand. The Holy Prophet[sa] once said: Every night there is a brief space of time during which whatever of good pertaining to this life or the next a Muslim supplicates for, it is granted him. (Muslim).

Hazrat Ayesha[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, never offered more than eleven raka'as at night during Ramadhan or at any other time. He would offer four raka'as long and perfect, and then four of the same type and then three (vitr). I asked him: Messenger of Allah, do you sleep before offering vitr? He answered: Ayesha, my eyes sleep but my heart does not (Bukhari and Muslim).

The Tahajjud prayers described above is a voluntary prayer comprising of two to eight raka'as, offered, in succession of twos or fours, from midnight till dawn manifests itself. It is concluded by three raka'as of vitr. It may be offered individually or in congregation. The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam attaches great importance to this prayer.

The Taraveeh prayers is actually an extension of the Tahajjud prayers offered by the Holy Prophet[sa]. It was introduced by Hazrat Umar [ra] as a congregational or individual prayer for the month of Ramadhan. The Taraveeh prayer is offered after two voluntary raka'as of the Isha prayers (the last of the five compulsory prayers). It comprises of eight raka'as, again offered in succession of twos or fours and concluded with the vitr prayers in congregation. The Taraveeh prayers were essentially introduced to prevent the habit, still prevalent among some Muslims, to retire to bed immediately after a hearty meal (Iftar) and the offering of the Maghrib and Isha prayers. An opportunity is frequently taken of completing the entire Quran, from beginning to end, in phased stages, during Ramadhan through Taraveeh prayers led by a Hafiz-ul-Quran (an individual who has committed the Quran to memory). It goes without saying that the Tahajjud prayers are preferred to the Taraveeh prayers. A Muslim is required to carry out all his normal functions during the month of Ramadhan e.g. if he is a businessman, he may still carry out his business duties while fasting during the daytime. However, in some Muslim countries, Ramadhan is an official month of holidays. Muslims in such countries engage themselves in heavy meals in the evening to make up for what they have lost. They then sleep the night through and miss out the pre-dawn meal. These practices are not what Islam recommends but what some Muslims have devised for themselves. The emphasis is on prayers, not on sleep.

On miscellaneous matters:

- Hazrat Aamir ibn Rabia[ra] says that several times he saw the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, brush his teeth while he was fasting.

- A companion of the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, says that he saw the Holy Prophet[sa] at a place called Araj, drenching his head with water, while he was fasting, because of thirst or heat. Care should be exercised when performing ablutions so that one does not swallow water.

- Voluntary vomiting, taking injections or enema treatment are infringements of fasts. If vomiting causes weakness, the fast can be ended. For intentional infringement of a fast during the month of Ramadhan, it is not only necessary to keep another fast on another day but also to observe the penalty of keeping sixty successive fasts or to feed sixty poor people either in one place or separately or to feed one similar person for sixty days or to pay an equivalent sum of money, or to free a slave.

- Hazrat Abu Huraira[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: if anyone hears the call to prayers while he is still in the process of drinking or eating the final portions, he should complete the process or eating or drinking.

- Hazrat Abu Huraira[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would persuade voluntary prayers during Ramadhan but would not order them imperatively. He said: He who maintains voluntary prayers throughout Ramadhan, out of sincerity of faith and in hope of earning merit, will have his past sins forgiven him. (Muslim).

- Hazrat Zaid ibn Khalid Juhni[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: He who provides for the breaking of fast of another earns the same merit as the one who was observing the fast without diminishing in any way the reward of the latter. (Tirmidhi).

- Hazrat Anas[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet (sa) came to visit Sa'ad ibn Ubadah (ra) who brought bread and olive oil and presented it to him. The Holy Prophet (sa) partook of it and said: Those who were fasting have broken their fast with you and the righteous have eaten your food while the angels were calling down blessings on you. (Abu Daud).

Picture Source: Getty Images / silkfactory) © Desired

THE BENEFITS OF FASTING: A RELIGIOUS AND SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Hameed A. Mirza
Majlis Peace Village East

Photo by Yusuf Mansoor onUnsplash.comom

Fasting in the month of Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam and an obligatory act. Allah states in the Holy Qur'an:

"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous." (Qur'an, 2:184)

In Arabic, the word for fasting is sawm, which linguistically means "to prevent from doing something." In Islamic law, fasting means abstaining from food, drink, and other physical needs from dawn until sunset.

Allah further explains:

"The prescribed fasting is for a fixed number of days, but whoso among you is sick or is on a journey shall fast the same number of other days; and for those who are able to fast only with great difficulty is an expiation—the feeding of a poor man. And whoso performs a good work with willing obedience, it is better for him. And fasting is good for you, if you only knew." (Qur'an, 2:185)

In this article, we will reflect on the last part of verse 185: "And fasting is good for you, if you only knew." This statement not only highlights the spiritual significance of fasting but also points to its numerous psychological, physical, and health benefits, as confirmed by modern science.

Spiritual and Psychological Benefits of Fasting

Fasting provides us with a profound opportunity to strengthen our connection with our Creator. It encourages us to engage in increased acts of worship, developing a sense of spiritual closeness and devotion. During fasting, we dedicate more time to performing prayers, reciting, and deeply reflecting on the Holy Qur'an, allowing us to gain a deeper understanding of its teachings. Additionally, fasting inspires us to make extra supplications, seeking the love, mercy, and pleasure of Allah. This heightened spiritual engagement helps purify our hearts, enhance our faith, and cultivate a greater sense of gratitude and humility.

Fasting strengthens self-discipline, patience, and willpower. It gives us a sense of confidence that we can accomplish challenging tasks. Ramadan provides an excellent opportunity for practicing self-restraint by requiring us to abstain from food and drink from dawn to sunset.

Additionally, fasting nurtures empathy and compassion by reminding us of the struggles of less fortunate communities. By experiencing hunger and thirst, we become more conscious of the needs of the underprivileged, leading to greater generosity and charitable acts.

Moreover, fasting helps combat anxiety and depression by promoting a healthier lifestyle.

It enhances mood, reduces negative emotions, and provides mental clarity by removing toxins from the body and redirecting energy towards cognitive function.

Fasting and Self-Control

Fasting involves cultivating self-discipline and resisting impulses. It teaches us to control our desires and focus on spiritual and moral growth.

Furthermore, fasting strengthens our commitment to truthfulness, hospitality, and neighborliness. Those who observe fasting with sincerity and maintain healthy dietary patterns, avoid addictions, and engage in charitable acts not only develop into ideal human beings but also receive divine blessings and protection.

Scientific and Health Benefits of Fasting

Modern research supports the many physiological benefits of fasting. Studies have shown that fasting can:

1. Improve Metabolic Health and Promote Weight Loss

- Fasting promotes fat breakdown by shifting the body into ketosis, where it burns stored fat for energy.
- Short-term fasting increases norepinephrine levels, which helps burn more calories.
- Intermittent fasting reduces calorie intake while maintaining muscle mass.

2. Enhance Cellular Repair and Longevity

- Fasting activates autophagy, a process that removes damaged cells and reduces the risk of neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.
- Research suggests that fasting may increase lifespan by reducing oxidative stress and enhancing cellular repair mechanisms.

3. Regulate Blood Sugar and Improve Insulin Sensitivity

- Fasting can reduce insulin resistance, lowering the risk of Type 2 diabetes.
- It enhances the body's ability to use insulin efficiently, maintaining balanced blood sugar levels.

4. Support Heart Health

- Fasting reduces chronic inflammation, a key factor in heart disease.
- Studies indicate that alternate-day fasting can lower blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and triglycerides.
- Intermittent fasting has been linked to reduced risks of metabolic syndrome, which increases susceptibility to diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

5. Boost Brain Function and Mental Clarity

- Fasting increases Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF), which supports cognitive function and learning.
- It may protect against neurodegenerative disorders by reducing oxidative stress and inflammation.
- Energy normally used for digestion is redirected to brain activity, enhancing focus and mental clarity.

6. Strengthen the Immune System

- Extended fasting stimulates the regeneration of immune cells, strengthening the body's defense mechanisms.
- Fasting may help fight infections by reducing inflammation and promoting cellular repair.

7. Improve Gut Health and Digestion

- Fasting supports gut microbiome balance by allowing beneficial bacteria to thrive.
- It helps alleviate digestive issues such as bloating, acid reflux, and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

Scientific Research on Fasting

A review article published in Nutrients noted that intermittent fasting and time-restricted feeding may reduce risk factors associated with metabolic syndrome.

In a study analyzing 18 trials, researchers found that intermittent fasting significantly reduced inflammation-related substances in the body. Another study in the American Cancer Society Journal suggested that fasting could slow tumor growth and reduce chemotherapy toxicity in some cancer patients.

Additionally, fasting has been found to:

- Increase the diversity of beneficial gut bacteria, which are linked to longevity.
- Boost Human Growth Hormone (HGH), which plays a vital role in muscle growth, metabolism, and overall health.
- Enhance mitochondrial function and antioxidant defenses, leading to increased longevity and reduced disease risk.

Conclusion

Fasting in the month of Ramadan brings enormous benefits for our spiritual uplift and physical well-being, as emphasized in the Qur'an: "And fasting is good for you, if you only knew."

In addition to countless spiritual benefits, fasting is a scientifically validated method of improving physical and mental well-being. It promotes weight loss, boosts brain function, strengthens the immune system, and supports heart health.

May Allah enable us to keep fast during the blessed month of Ramadan and may we all reap the countless spiritual and physical benefits of fasting and strive to lead healthier, more fulfilling lives to thank Allah for His favors on us by prescribing fasting in the month of Ramadan every year. Ameen!

The Nutritional Value of Dates

During fasting, it's essential to consume nutrient-dense foods that can provide sustained energy throughout the day. Dates are sweet but they are also a nutritional powerhouse. Although dates are 70% sugar-packed, many date varieties have low glycaemic index (GI) (indicates the effect of food to blood sugar (glucose) level) and contain polyphenols compounds with antioxidant, anti-inflammatory properties that can protect the body from inflammation. The amount of polyphenols in dates is higher than most other fruits and vegetables. They are a rich in fibre, which not only satisfies one's sweet cravings but also helps in keeping a person full for a longer time. Additionally, dates provide important nutrients that are essential for the body, such as vitamin A, vitamin B-6 and C and minerals such as calcium, magnesium, copper, sodium, phosphorus, zinc, selenium, fluorine, potassium, and iron. They are a great source of potassium, which is an electrolyte that aids in regulating blood pressure and preventing muscle cramps. Date fruits contain protein (approximately 3%) and 23 different amino acids, some of which are not commonly found in other fruits. Including dates in a person's diet can be a good way to get more dietary fibre, as just 100 grams or a quarter cup of dates can provide 22% of the recommended daily intake of fibre.

(Reviewofreligions: 18th April 2023)

HEALTH & WELLNESS SEMINAR REPORT MISSISSAUGA REGION

Report prepared by: Ghyour Khan - Nazim Zahanat wa Sehat Jismani &
Muzaffar Ahmad Mirza – Nazim Isār (Social Services)

Alhamdulillah by the grace of Allah Majlis Ansarullah Mississauga Region Organized " Health & Wellness seminar " under the departments of Zahanat wa Sehat Jismani AND Isār (Social Services).

Health & Wellness seminar held at Baitul Hamd, February 08, 2025 from 1:00 pm To 3:40 pm, it start with the recitation of quran (Tilawat), Chaired by the Respected Nāzim A'lā , Mississauga, Respected Amir Sahib, Mississauga, and Respected National Isār representative. Fifty five (55) Ansar attended the seminar. Alhamdulillah

Healthcare Professional started the seminar with a Presentation covering topics Back/ Neck pain, Sprains/strains, Muscles and joint pain and Limited mobility.

After the presentation question/answer session is held, the question/answer session brings a lot of interest for everyone and requests to continue after prayers break. Zuhar & Asr prayers at 2:10 pm. Lunch starts at 2:30 pm, during the lunch Healthcare Professional provides the valuable tips on one and one bases, and the Q/A session continues till 3:40 pm.

At the end Respected Amir sb Mississauga presented the token of appreciation to Healthcare Professional.

Majlis Ansarullah Mississauga Region
HEALTH & WELLNESS SEMINAR